

Worksession

Agenda Item #	6
Meeting Date	1 October 2007
Prepared By	Ilonia Blanchard Senior Planner
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Discussion of Revision to the Takoma Park Code, Chapter 8.40.120, Commercial District Facade Regulations - Signs
Background	<p>The Council established the Facade Advisory Board (FAB) to serve in an advisory role to the City Council and as the Local Advisory Panel to the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, providing recommendations on proposed facade changes in the Old Town and Takoma Junction. The recommendations of the FAB are governed by the design standards set forth in <i>Takoma Park Code Title 8.40 Commercial District Facade Regulations, Article 2 Standards</i>.</p> <p>The Board, in the midst of a review of these standards to ensure that they appropriately reflect the character of Old Town and Takoma Junction, noted that the installation of signage which is displayed perpendicular to the building, though permitted by Montgomery County and the Historic Preservation Commission, was prohibited. Several businesses have requested this type of signage which the FAB believes is appropriate to the character of these historic commercial districts. The need for additional changes to the design standards used by the FAB in its review of new signage became apparent as the Board's review of the Code progressed.</p> <p>In the interest of furthering the economic vitality of Old Town and Takoma Junction and the preservation its architectural character, the Facade Advisory Board has recommended amending the design standards detailed in <i>Chapter 8.40.120 Signs</i>.</p> <p>The amended design standards were approved by the Facade Advisory Board at a September 11, 2007 meeting. Representatives of the Board will be present at the October 1 worksession to address any concerns the council may have regarding the proposed amendment.</p>
Policy	<p>The City Manager, in conjunction and with the FAB, shall implement, enforce and routinely update the City Standards.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Takoma Park Code Title 8.40.050</i></p>
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	Recommended Amendments
Recommendation	Review and comment on proposed amendment
Special Consideration	The first reading of the proposed amendment is tentatively scheduled for October 8.

Commercial District Facade Regulations - Design Standards for Signs
Takoma Park Code Title 8.40.120
Recommended Amendments

8.40.120 Signs.

~~A. Design (Modifications/Replacement):~~

- ~~1. Signs must be compatible with or complementary to the character of the facade.~~
- ~~2. Sign materials shall be easily maintained and may include treated fabric, natural or painted wood, metal, and metal, wood, plastic or painted numbers and letters.~~
- ~~3. Signs may not exceed a maximum of 30" high nor project more than 8" from the building facade.~~
- ~~4. The maximum allowable sign area in square feet shall not exceed 2 times the frontage width of the building in feet. Sign area is the entire portion that can be enclosed within a single, continuous rectangle around the extreme limits of the letters, figures, designs, and illumination, plus any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or building structure against which it is placed.~~
- ~~5. Lettering applied to windows or entrance doors may not exceed 12" in height and the text shall be limited to the street number and/or name of the business.~~
- ~~6. Signs at the rear of the building may not exceed 6 square feet in size and may not be luminous.~~
- ~~7. Signs painted on the facade or on the inside of windows shall be no greater than 8" in height, except if they are the only identifying sign for the property, in which case they may be a maximum of 12" in height.~~
- ~~8. The size of signs on shopfront windows may not exceed 20% of the glass area.~~
- ~~9. Non-illuminated secondary signs shall be permitted for the identification of commercial tenants occupying the upper floors of a building, but shall not project above the building ground floor entry door lintel.~~
- ~~10. Signs shall be placed in the shop window, above the shop window, and below the sill of the second floor window or on a fixed awning.~~
- ~~11. Exterior wall mounted signs may not be luminous but may be illuminated as described in Section 8.40.130.~~
- ~~12. Neon signs are permitted inside the store window. Flashing or moving signs (other than barber poles) are not permitted.~~
- ~~13. Rooftop signs, above the parapet of the building, billboards, or outdoor advertising signs painted or mounted on the buildings are not permitted.~~
- ~~14. Signs mounted at right angles to the face of the building are not permitted.~~
- ~~15. Signs painted on buildings are not permitted.~~
- ~~16. Billboards other than those identifying the general shopping area are not permitted.~~
- ~~17. Decorative neon lights are permitted on the front facades of the building.~~

~~B. Maintenance:~~

- ~~1. Temporary signs of all types may not occupy more than 20% of the window area and may not be left in place for more than 30 consecutive days.~~
- ~~2. Abandoned or outdated signs, billboards and related posts and structures shall be removed within 30 days of disuse. (Ord. 1999-43 § 2G, 1999)~~

A. Design Standards for modification or construction of new or replacement signage.

1. Zoning Regulations: All permanent and temporary signage shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the regulations set forth in the Montgomery County Code Article 59-F.
2. Required Permits: Historic Area Work Permits shall be secured from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission prior to the installation or modification of a sign in designated historic districts. Sign permits shall be obtained from the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services prior to sign installation.
3. General Requirements: In general, signs should not obscure or detract from architectural details. Signs should be positioned and designed to complement and emphasize the building architecture, including special shapes or details of the facade; draw attention to the building's entrance; or to emphasize a display window where feasible and desirable.
4. Wall Signs: Signs that are mounted parallel to the wall of the building may not extend more than 8 inches from the building face.
5. Projecting Signs: Projecting signs may not extend more than 3 feet from the building face.
6. Awning or Canopy Signs: Signs may be incorporated as part of awnings or canopies. Images and lettering should be confined to the vertical face.
7. Free-Standing Signs: Signs erected on the ground or attached to a structure such as a post, pole or column as its sole source of support, should be appropriate to the context, balanced in size and in height and not unduly obstruct the view of the building or the view along the streetscape.
8. Temporary Signs: Aggregated area of all temporary signs in a windows may not exceed more than 20% of the window area and may not remain in place for more than 30 days.
9. Limited Duration Signs: Limited duration signs including banners shall conform with this City of Takoma Park ordinance with the exception of standard G1.B and G1.J.
10. Sign Materials: Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain. Appropriate materials include but are not limited to painted or carved wood,

aluminum, stone, acrylic, neon, glass, and stained glass.

11. *Illumination: Light sources external to the sign surface and directed downward toward the sign are preferred. The light level should not overpower the facade or other elements of the building or adjacent streetscape. The light source should be shielded from pedestrian view. Internal lighting may be appropriate where only letters are illuminated or neon is used.*
12. *Sign Shape: Signs should be designed in simple, straight forward shapes that convey their messages clearly. Symbols should be easily readable.*
13. *Graphics: Lettering should be properly proportioned and easy to read. In most instances, simple fonts are preferred. The number of fonts should be limited to two per sign. As a general rule, the letters should not occupy more than 75% of the total sign panel. Finishes should be matte or non-glare with graphics in high contrast to their backgrounds.*

B. Maintenance Standards

1. Signs shall be appropriately maintained with missing lettering, peeling paint, and other signs of deterioration corrected in a timely fashion. Damaged and obsolete signs, as well as associated posts, wiring and structures, shall be repaired or removed within 30 days of notice by the City.